A FUNERAL

SERMON

Occaſioned by the

Much lamented DEATH

Of the late REVEREND

Mr. *Matthew Clarke:*

Who departed this Life, *March* 27. 1726.
An. Ætat. LXII.

By DANIEL NEAL, *A. M.*

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MATTHEW XXV. 21.

His Lord ſaid unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, thou haſt been faithful over a few Things, I will make thee Ruler over many Things: Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.

IT is a very afflicting Conſideration to think in whoſe Place I now ſtand, and of the melancholy Occaſion that has brought me hither; if the Art of Phyſicians, or the Prayers and Interceſſions of the People of GOD could have prevailed, you had ſtill enjoyed the Labours of your late Reve-

rend and worthy Paſtor; but ſince the Will of GOD has determined otherwiſe, it is our Duty to be ſilent, and to improve in the beſt manner we can, the awful Providence.

THE Kingdom of Heaven, or the coming of the Son of Man, is compared in this Chapter to a Maſter of a Family travelling into a far Country, who at his Departure called his Servants together, and delivered them certain Talents to improve according to their Abilities, to one he gave Five Talents, to another Two, and to a third One. The Maſter of the Family in the Parable is CHRIST, the Servants are his Diſciples, and Followers, and more eſpecially Miniſters: By the Maſter's travelling into a far Country, we may underſtand, our SAVIOUR's Aſcenſion into Heaven to receive a Kingdom, and his continuing there till the Reſtitution of all Things: The Talents, are ſpiritual Gifts, or Capacities for Service, which are wiſely diſtributed according to Mens Abilities. Some Learned Men are of Opinion that our SAVIOUR had his Eye upon the ſeveral Orders of Perſons in his Church, that, to his Apoſtles He gave Five Talents, to the Seventy, who had received fewer ſpiritual Gifts

Two

Two Talents, and to the reſt of his Diſciples but One. But others, with greater Certainty, underſtand it of the various Diſtributions of Divine Favours amongſt Mankind, in which the Great GOD acts as a Sovereign, dividing to every Man ſeverally as He pleaſes; ſome have more of the Gifts of Nature and Grace than others, according to the Determinations of Infinite Wiſdom; but every Man has ſome Talent to trade with, and conſequently ſome Account to give of his Improvement. 'Tis evident from this Parable that all our Abilities and Capacities of Service are from GOD, and therefore they are called *his Goods*. Ver. 14. As the Author of Nature, He has all the Stores of Providence in his Hand, and as the GOD of Grace, his People receive out of his Fulneſs Grace for Grace. Now as Men are diſtinguiſhed by their Talents, GOD expects a proportionable Improvement, for *where much is given, much is required*; accordingly, he that had received Five Talents in the Parable, gained Five more, and he that had Two, made them Two more; for tho' our Talents are the Gift of GOD, they are not given us to do with as we will; but they are given us in Truſt,

Truſt, and with a Charge to improve them in our Maſter's Service; Miniſters therefore are called Stewards of the manifold Grace of GOD, as private Chriſtians are of their Eſtates, and of all the Moral and Divine Favours conferred upon them. And it is of great Conſequence how we behave in our ſeveral Stations of Service, becauſe we are accountable to our Lord and Maſter, who will ſummons us before his Tribunal to give an Account of every Thing we have done in the Body. This is fully aſſerted in the Parable, *After a long time the Lord of thoſe Servants cometh and reckoneth with them.* No particular Time is mentioned, but it was during their LORD's Pleaſure, who appoints ſome a longer, and others a ſhorter Time of Service, at the End of which, He will reckon with them; and then every One of us likewiſe muſt give an Account of himſelf to GOD: though the great and final Day of Reckoning will not be till the general Reſurrection, when *All that are in their Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and come forth; they that have done Good to the Reſurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil to the Reſurrection of Damnation.*

Ver. 19.

John v. 28, 29.

THE

THE Parable proceeds with the Account the ſeveral Servants gave of their *Truſt* to their Lord, and their Lord's Sentence; I have no Occaſion to look any farther than the firſt, becauſe the Words of my *Text* are the Sentence which CHRIST pronounced upon him; *Lord*, ſays the Servant, *thou deliveredſt me five Talents; behold, I have gained beſides them five, more:* "I have em-"ployed my Time and Strength ac-"cording to my poor Abilities in thy "Service; I have traded with the Ta-"lents, and thro' a Divine Bleſſing on "my Endeavours, it has turned to "ſome Account; for with the Five "Talents thou deliveredſt me, I have "gained Five more." Then follows his Lord's Approbation, *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, thou haſt been faithful over a few Things, I will make thee Ruler over many Things, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

FOR the Improvement of this Subject, I would conſider theſe Three Things:

Firſt, THE Character and Commendation of the Perſon, *A good and faithful Servant.*

Secondly,

Secondly, His Lord's Approbation of him, *Well done; thou haſt been faithful over a few Things.*

Thirdly, The Reward of his Faithfulneſs, *I will make the Ruler over many Things; enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

Firſt, I am to conſider the Character and Commendation of the Perſon, *A good and faithful Servant.* All true Chriſtians are the Servants of Christ; *for his Servants we are, to whom we obey*; but the Miniſters of Christ are his Servants in a higher Senſe, becauſe they are ſolemnly devoted to the ſacred Work, and are employ'd in the more immediate Services of his Houſe: Beſides they act in Commiſſion from Him, and are his Ambaſſadors to declare his Mind and Will to the World; the Apoſtles therefore in their ſeveral Epiſtles, ſtyle themſelves the *Servants of* Christ; and their Succeſſors, the Miniſters of the Goſpel in every Age, may be allowed to ſay of themſelves, *Now then we are Ambaſſadors for* Christ; we are his Miniſters and Servants, and tho' many that call themſelves Chriſtians deſpiſe our Character, yet

yet we are humbly bold to *magnify our Office*; for if it be an Honour to be an Ambaſſador to an earthly Prince, it muſt be a greater Honour to be an Ambaſſador of CHRIST, who is *King of Nations, and King of Saints*, and has ſaid concerning his faithful Miniſters, *He that receiveth whomſoever I ſend, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.*

BUT the Servant in my *Text* is farther recommended by theſe Two Characters, his *Goodneſs* and his *Fidelity*.

Firſt, HE is called, *A good Servant*; which muſt include theſe Three Particulars;

Firſt, A good Servant of CHRIST muſt be a good Man, in a State of Favour and Acceptance with GOD, *juſtified and ſanctified in the Name of the Lord* JESUS *and by the Spirit of our* GOD. He muſt have a vital Principle of Grace in his Heart, his Soul muſt be renewed after the Divine Image, and his Affections ſet upon Things Above; he ſhould have an experimental Acquaintance with the Operations of the HOLY SPIRIT in opening the Eyes of the Blind, and in turning them from

Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan to GOD, without this, his Heart will not be in his Work, nor can he expect to do Good to Souls. External Gifts and Qualifications for the Miniſterial Service, are neceſſary in their Places; but *if we have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries and all Knowledge, and though we could ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity*, or a vital Principle of the Love of GOD and our Neighbour in our Hearts, *we are nothing*. I am ſenſible the greateſt Part of the World have little Regard to this; Men are brought up to the Miniſtry as to a Trade, and enter upon the ſacred Work chiefly with an Eye to the Preferments annexed to it. But it is impoſſible with me, that an unconverted Perſon can be a good Servant of JESUS CHRIST.

Secondly, A GOOD Servant of CHRIST ſhould be of a good Spirit, that is, of a good Temper and Diſpoſition: The ſame Spirit that was in CHRIST, ſhould adorn the Lives and Converſations of his Servants: Now the Spirit of CHRIST was meek and gentle, humble and compaſſionate, full of Mercy and Good-works, with

with all which he had a becoming Zeal for the Glory of GOD and the Good of Souls; He loved his very Enemies, and was always ready to forgive them; *when He was reviled, He reviled not again, and when He ſuffered, He threatned not*; his heavenly Soul was void of all the black Paſſions of Malice, Wrath, Envying, and Evil-ſpeaking; but was filled with univerſal Love and Goodneſs. *Such an High Prieſt*, ſays the Apoſtle, *became us*, and ſuch a Spirit is the Glory and Ornament of his faithful Servants. *He that has Knowledge*, ſays the Wiſe Man, *ſpareth his Words, and a Man of Underſtanding is of an excellent Spirit.* And what that excellent Spirit is, in a Miniſter of CHRIST, we may learn from the Apoſtle *Paul*, *The Servant of the* LORD *muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all Men, apt to teach, patient, in Meekneſs inſtructing them that oppoſe themſelves, if peradventure,* GOD *will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.* 2 Tim. ii. 24.

Thirdly, A good Servant of CHRIST, muſt have good Abilities for his Work; for every good Man is not fit to make a good Miniſter; the Lord in the Parable conſidered the Abilities of his Servants, when he gave them their Talents;

Ver. 15. lents; to one he gave Five Talents, to another Two, and to a third One; to every Man according to his ſeveral Abilities. I have not Time to ſet before you the ſeveral Abilities, which are requiſite to a good Servant of CHRIST in the Work of the Miniſtry; but amongſt others, theſe are certainly of Conſequence: A thorough Acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, to enable him to diſtinguiſh between Truth and Error; an Ability to defend the Truths of the Goſpel againſt their Adverſaries; an Aptneſs to Teach, ſo as to enter into the Conſcience of a ſecure Sinner, and to bind up the Broken-hearted Penitent, which requires the Tongue of the Learned, according to
Iſa. 1. 4. the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *The Lord God has given me the Tongue of the Learned, that I ſhould know how to ſpeak a Word in Seaſon to him that is weary.* To all which may be added, a skilful diſcerning of the Times in general, and of the particular Circumſtances of thoſe to whom we miniſter; for there may be ſome particular Times which may require our inforcing ſome Doctrines and Duties of Religion more than others; and every good Miniſter is a Watchman, to blow the Trumpet and ſound the Alarm, when he is apprehenſive

prehenſive of Danger. Happy is the Man that hath theſe Talents, and happy the People that are bleſſed with ſuch a good Servant of JESUS CHRIST!

BUT, *Secondly*, the Servant in my *Text* is not only commended for his Goodneſs, but for his Fidelity; which includes theſe Two Things:

Firſt, UPRIGHTNESS and Integrity of Mind; for a deceitful Perſon cannot make a faithful Servant; he may impoſe upon the World, and gain the Applauſe of his Fellow-Servants; but it muſt be at the Expence of his Maſter's Intereſt; theſe the Apoſtle calls, *Eye-Servants, and Men-pleaſers*; many of whom will ſay to CHRIST, at the laſt Day, *Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name caſt out Devils, and done many wonderful Works: But He will profeſs to them, He never knew them.* CHRIST looks at the Principles from which his Servants acts, and the Views they have in the ſeveral Parts of their Service; 'tis eaſy for a Miniſter to accommodate himſelf to the Taſte of his Hearers; But then what will become of his Fidelity to his Lord and Maſter? *Do I ſeek to pleaſe Men*, ſays the Apoſtle *Paul*,

Gal. i. 10. *Paul, for if I yet pleaſed Men, I ſhould not be the Servant of* CHRIST? We may pleaſe our Friends as far as we can with a good Conſcience; but when this is inconſiſtent with our Duty to CHRIST, we ought to renounce all worldly Intereſts, that we may retain our Integrity. This was the Apoſtle's Practice, and you may ſee how he undervalues the Cenſoriouſneſs of the *Corinthians*, who treated him, as if he had been accountable to them rather than to CHRIST:

1 Cor. iv. 1. *Let a Man ſo account of us, as of the Miniſters of* CHRIST, *and Stewards of the Myſteries of* GOD. *Moreover, it is required in Stewards, that a Man be found faithful: but with me it is a ſmall Thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of Man's Judgment; yea, I judge not mine own ſelf, but he that judgeth me is the* LORD.

Secondly, IT includes Diligence and Application to his Maſter's Service, and thus the faithful Servant is oppoſed to the ſlothful one, who hid his Maſter's Talent in the Earth. A ſlothful Servant, in the common Affairs of Life, is a bad Character; but it is much worſe in a Servant of CHRIST; and yet how many are there, who wear the Badge and Character of CHRIST's Miniſters,

Miniſters, but are very ſeldom employed in his Service; the Work of the Miniſtry is not fulfilled by our appearing in the Pulpit, once in a Week, or in a Month, but it is to be the chief Buſineſs of our Lives: We are not only to preach the Word on the *Lord's Day*, but *to be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all Long-ſuffering and Doctrine.* It is an awful Charge the Apoſtle gives his Son *Timothy*, *Be thou an Example to the Believers in Word and Converſation.—Give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine.—Meditate on theſe Things, and give thyſelf wholly to them. Take heed to thyſelf, and to thy Doctrine, continue in them; for in doing this, thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf and them that hear thee.* What Variety of Expreſſions does he uſe, to perſuade this young *Evangeliſt* to Diligence and Application in his Maſter's Service: And his Counſel will be regarded by all that deſire to be found faithful, when they conſider that it is written, *Curſed is he that does the Work of the* LORD *negligently.* 1 Tim. iv. 12, 13.

THUS I have conſidered the Character and Commendation of the Perſon; *A good and faithful Servant.* I go on

Secondly,

Secondly, To conſider his Lord's Approbation of him, *Well done, thou haſt been faithful over a few Things.* This Sentence was not pronounced till he had finiſhed his Work, and was diſcharged from any farther Service. God is pleaſed ſometimes to encourage his Servants in the Way, but He does not deliver his final Judgment of them, 'till they come to the End of their Service; there have been ſome that have run well for a Time, but then ſomething has hindered them; and others have put their Hands to the Plough, and looked back; who are ſo far from having *done well*, that in our Saviour's account they are not fit for the Kingdom of God. But when our Lord comes to reckon with us, and put the whole of our Service together, then will be the Time of Retribution; and it will be happy for us if upon the whole, He will ſay to us, *Well done!* conſidering how many Weakneſſes and Imperfections attend our beſt Services, and that without the Blood of Christ, God would reject them, and ſay, *Who has required ſuch Things at your Hands?* But how kind and gracious is our Merciful Redeemer, who covers the Infirmities of his faithful Servants, and

Luke ix. 16.

makes

makes no mention of them in the Day of Account; the beſt and moſt faithful Servants of CHRIST may ſometimes be miſtaken in their Duty, or diſcharge it in a careleſs Manner; but there is no mention made of this in my *Text*, 'tis all covered and forgotten, and their Lord declares his Acceptance of their Perſons and Services, by ſaying, *Well done!*

BUT the Reaſon of his Approbation follows, *Thou haſt been faithful over a few Things*: Though the Servant in my *Text* was intruſted with Five Talents; yet this was but a ſmall Truſt, in Compariſon of the greater Bleſſings which are in reſerve for him in Heaven; *when he ſhall be made Ruler over many Things*: But at preſent all faithful Miniſters of CHRIST are intruſted with a *few Things* of great Conſequence and Importance. And amongſt others.

Firſt, WITH the great Concerns of their Maſter's Glory and Intereſt in the World, with the Preaching of his Goſpel, and the Propagating of his Kingdom; they are to fight his Battles, and to *contend earneſtly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*; for this purpoſe,

they are *to endure Hardſhip, as good Soldiers of* JESUS CHRIST, *and not to entangle themſelves with the Affairs of this Life, that they may pleaſe him who has choſen them to be Soldiers.* A faithful Servant of CHRIST, ought not to mind his own Concerns ſo much as the Concerns of his Maſter, nor to conſult his own Honour and Reputation, when they ſtand in Competition with his. This was the Spirit and Temper of the Apoſtles, and primitive Chriſtians, who *rejoyced that they were accounted worthy to ſuffer in the Cauſe of* CHRIST.

Secondly, THEY are intruſted with the ſacred Truths of the Goſpel; which were firſt delivered to the Apoſtles, and by them committed to faithful Men; *The Things which thou haſt heard of me among many Witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful Men, who ſhall be able to teach others alſo.* Now among theſe Truths, we may certainly reckon, the Purpoſes of Divine Grace concerning the Salvation of the *Elect* from before the Foundations of the World. The Ruin of Mankind, by the Fall of *Adam*, and their Recovery by CHRIST; the Doctrine of Juſtification by the Righteouſneſs and Death of the REDEEMER, with the Neceſſity of Faith,

2 Tim. ii. 2.

Faith, Repentance, and the New Creature. Theſe Doctrines they are to preach, and to defend; *O Timothy*, ſays the Apoſtle, *keep that that is committed to thy Truſt:* That is, thoſe Doctrines and Truths which thou haſt learned from me, keep them entire, hold them faſt, convey them down to Poſterity pure and uncorrupted. *Take heed to thy Doctrine*, that it depart not from the Simplicity that is in CHRIST.

Thirdly, THEY are intruſted with the Care of their Peoples Souls; the Chief Shepherd of the Sheep has appointed them the Overſight of the ſeveral Parts of his Flock, to bring Sinners into it, and to build up the Saints in their moſt holy Faith: Theſe they are to feed with the Bread of Life, to guide in the Ways of Truth and Holineſs, and to *watch for their Souls, as thoſe that muſt give an Account:* Private Chriſtians are only to account for themſelves, but Miniſters are to account for the Souls committed to their Charge; and happy is that Servant who can do it with Joy, and not with Grief!

THESE are ſome of thoſe *Things* which are committed in Truſt to the

Miniſters of CHRIST; the good Servant in my *Text*, had been faithful in them all: We may therefore ſuppoſe his Lord and Maſter expreſſing his Approbation of him after this manner:

" I entruſted thee with my Talents,
" and have given thee Time and Op-
" portunity to improve them; thou
" haſt now given up thine Account,
" and I acknowledge thou haſt been a
" faithful Steward; thou haſt fulfilled
" thy Miniſtry to my Satisfaction;
" and haſt taken *heed to the Flock over*
" *which thou waſt made an Overſeer:*
" I have obſerved farther, thy *Faith*
" and *Patience, and how that for my*
" *Name Sake thou haſt laboured, and*
" *haſt not fainted:* I take notice alſo
" of the Succeſs of thy Miniſtry, and
" the Encreaſe of my Kingdom, that
" the Pleaſure of the LORD hath pro-
" ſpered in thy Hands, and that there
" are many who will be thy Crown
" and thy Joy in the laſt Day: I have
" reviewed the whole of thy Conduct,
" ſince I entruſted thee with my *Goods*,
" and I am pleaſed with it: It has indeed
" been attended with ſome Frailties and
" Infirmities, but upon the whole, 'tis
" *well done*; thou haſt been faithful to
" me in a *few Things, I will* therefore
" now

" now *make thee Ruler over many*
" *Things.* ; *Enter into the Joy of thy*
" *Lord.*"

THIS brings me

Thirdly, TO conſider the Reward of the good and faithful Servant, which conſiſt of two Parts. Of great Dignity and Honour; and of perfect and conſummate Bliſs.

Firſt, EVERY good and faithful Servant of CHRIST ſhall be advanced to great Dignity and Honour: *I will make thee Ruler over many Things:* Here, He muſt expect to ſuffer Reproach for his Fidelity to his LORD and MASTER; but *the Sufferings of this preſent Life, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed:* The more we do and ſuffer for him here, the higher will be our Advancement in the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter; for as all Men do not make an equal Improvement of their Talents, 'tis probable they will not have the ſame Reward. *There is one Glory of* 1 Cor. xv. *the Sun, and another of the Moon, and* 41. *another Glory of the Stars; for one Star differs from another in Glory; and ſo it will be in the Reſurrection of the Dead.* The Reward of receiving *a Prophet in* Math. x. *the* 41.

the Name of a Prophet, differs from that of *a Righteous Man*: And in this very Parable, the Rewards are in proportion to the Improvement; he that had gained Ten Pounds, had Authority given him over Ten Cities; and he that had gained Five, had Authority over Five. But notwithſtanding all this, all glorified Saints will be compleatly happy, and will be advanced to the higheſt Stations of Honour and Dignity: They will all be made *Kings and Prieſts to* GOD *and the Father*, and *inherit the Kingdom prepared for them, from the Foundations of the World.* They will all wear Crowns of Glory that ſhall never fade away, and ſit down on the ſame Throne with CHRIST himſelf; they will all ſhare the Honour of Judging the World, and when they have ſeen the Downfall of all the Enemies of CHRIST's Kingdom, they will reign with Him for ever and ever. But here it muſt be remembred that the Rewards of another World, are not of *Debt*, but of *Grace*; for they are vaſtly beyond the Proportion of our Services; the Labours and Sufferings of the moſt eminent Servants of CHRIST, are not to be laid in the Balance againſt the loweſt Degree of the Heavenly Glory: Nay, I will venture to ſay, that

Luke xix. 16, 17.

ou

our beſt Services deſerve no manner of Recompence at all; for *when we have done our beſt, we are but unprofitable Servants, and have done no more than was our Duty to do*; therefore tho' the Scripture ſometimes calls the Happineſs of Heaven by the Name of a *Reward*, we muſt not imagine it to be a *Debt* due to our Services, but all our Expectations muſt be from the *Divine Grace* and *Favour*. But,

Secondly, THE faithful Servants of CHRIST will not only be advanced to the higheſt Honours, but will be poſſeſſed of the moſt conſummate Bliſs and Happineſs. *They ſhall enter into the Joy of their* LORD.

WE may obſerve here, that Heaven is a Place of perfect Joy; this World is a Scene of Sorrow and Trouble to good Men, but the next will be a State of unmixed Pleaſure; there will be no Sin, and therefore no Sorrow; there will be no Enemy to vex us, and therefore no Diſturbance of our Peace: *No Lion ſhall be there*, ſays the Prophet, *nor any ravenous Beaſt, but the Redeemed ſhall walk there, and the Ranſomed of the* LORD *ſhall return and come to* Zion *with Songs and everlaſting Joy on* Iſa. xxxv. 9, 10.

on their Heads, they ſhall obtain Joy and Gladneſs, and Sorrow, and Sighing ſhall fly away. There will certainly be the beſt Society, for there is GOD, and CHRIST, and an innumerable Company of Angels, and the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect; there are all the Patriarchs and Prophets of the *Old*, and all the Apoſtles and Martyrs of the *New Teſtament*, together with all our departed Friends and Brethren in CHRIST, with whom we ſhall have the moſt ſweet and delightful Converſation: Beſides, the Employment of Saints in Heaven is perfectly agreeable to their Natures, and according to their utmoſt Wiſhes and Deſires, and therefore it muſt be a State of *perfect Joy*.

WE may obſerve farther, That the Happineſs of Heaven is here called the *Joy of our* LORD, 'tis the Joy that He has purchaſed, and which He is now in the Poſſeſſion of; in the midſt of this Joy, CHRIST himſelf is now ſitting as a Conqueror upon his Throne, ſmiling upon every Soul that is entred *into* it: It was the Proſpect of this Joy, that animated our Bleſſed SAVIOUR under his heavy Sufferings; *For the Joy that was ſet before him, He endured the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame:* 'Tis the

Heb. xii. 2.

the Proſpect of the ſame Joy that encourages the Chriſtian's Faith and Patience: It was in the Faith and Hope of this Joy, that *Moſes eſteemed the Reproach of* CHRIST *greater Riches than the Treaſures of* Egypt, *for he had reſpect unto the Recompence of Reward.* This therefore is a farther Recommendation of the Happineſs of Heaven; It would be a Pleaſure to a Chriſtian to be with CHRIST in any Place, or in the moſt afflictive Circumſtances; but to be with Him in ſuch a Place of Joy, and in ſuch high and advanced Stations of Glory, muſt be ſuch a Degree of Happineſs *as Eye hath not* yet *ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor* is it poſſible for *the Heart of Man to conceive.* Heb. xi. 26.

NOW into all this Joy, will every faithful Servant of CHRIST enter when he has finiſhed his Labours and Sufferings in this World. And how will he enter? Why, with all the Marks of Triumph and Victory, with a Crown upon his Head, and a Palm of Victory in his Hand; a Guard of Angels ſhall convoy the departing Soul thro' the Regions of the Air, and when the Gates of Heaven are opened to receive it, it ſhall be welcomed with the Acclamations of the innumerable Company; *For*

if there be Joy in Heaven at the Repentance of a Sinner, how much louder muſt be the Triumph when he enters into Glory: And if Heaven rejoyces, ſurely the Believer himſelf muſt be filled with unſpeakable Pleaſure, when with the Body of Fleſh he hath put off every thing that might make him uneaſy, on his own account, or on the account of the Kingdom and Intereſt of CHRIST, and is entring into an everlaſting Kingdom of Peace and Love; for there are no Contentions in Heaven, no Back-bitings, nor Evil-ſpeakings, no Diviſions, nor Unkindneſſes of any ſort. Theſe might interrupt the Harmony of the Place, and therefore they are excluded; Songs and everlaſting Joy being on every Head, and univerſal Gladneſs in every Countenance.

I ſhall now make ſome Remarks on this Diſcourſe:

AND *Firſt*, we may obſerve, That all our Talents of Nature and Grace are from GOD, *Every good and every perfect Gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights*: And there is a beautiful Variety in the Diſtribution of them amongſt Men; ſome have more and others fewer, ſome have Talents of one kind, and others of another,

other, but all are from GOD; the Apoſtle takes notice of this, in the Diſtribution of thoſe miraculous Gifts which were beſtowed on the Primitive Church: *There are Diverſity of Gifts, but the ſame Spirit; and there are Differences of Adminiſtrations, but the ſame* LORD; *and there are Diverſities of Operations, but it is the ſame* GOD, *who worketh all and in all.* And this is equally true concerning the common Bleſſings of Providence; ſo that we may ſay with the Apoſtle, *Who maketh thee to differ, or what haſt thou that thou haſt not received?* 1 Cor. xii 4, &c.

Secondly, ALL the Diſtributions of Nature and Grace amongſt Men, are to be improved in their Maſter's Service; for they are not their own *Goods*, but *His*, who expects they ſhould return them with Advantage: The Talent was taken from the ſlothful Servant, and a ſevere Sentence paſs'd upon him becauſe he did not improve it as he ought; *Thou wicked and ſlothful Servant, thou oughteſt at leaſt to have put my Money to the Exchangers, that I might have had it again with Uſury: Take therefore the Talent from him, and caſt ye the unprofitable Servant into outer Darneſs, there ſhall be Weeping and Gnaſhing of* Ver. 26, 27.

Teeth. For this Reaſon we are called *Stewards*, and it is required of Stewards that they be faithful: Miniſters are *Stewards of the manifold Grace of* God, as private Chriſtians are of their Eſtates, of their Capacities and Opportunities of Service, and in general, of all the Bleſſings which Divine Providence confers upon them. It follows from hence,

Thirdly, That there muſt certainly be a Time of Reckoning. The particular Time when you or I ſhall be required to give an Account of our Stewardſhip, is uncertain, but ſooner or later, *We muſt all appear before the Judgment-ſeat of* Christ. Some have thought our Time of Reckoning will not be 'till the End of the World: But then what muſt become of the Soul in the mean time, and where muſt it exiſt? Muſt it be happy or miſerable? Or, will it ſleep with the Body 'till the Reſurrection? The Soul can neither be happy nor miſerable 'till it has given up its Account, and received its Sentence; and to ſuppoſe it to ſleep 'till the Reſurrection, is contrary to the expreſs Language of Scripture, which ſays, that *when we are abſent from the Body, we ſhall be preſent with the* Lord. It muſt therefore

therefore follow, that CHRIST will reckon with all Perſons at their Death. For then their Labours and Services being ended, 'tis proper they ſhould *receive according to what they have done in the Body, whether it be Good or Evil.*

Fourthly, 'TIS Divine Grace alone that enables us to be faithful. Our firſt Parents in the State of Innocence were intruſted with a great many Talents, and were left to manage them by their natural Powers; but they betrayed their Truſt by giving way to the Temptation of the Serpent: Now if Man in a State of Innocence with all the Powers of Nature in their full Strength, did not retain his Integrity, what can be expected from his fallen Poſterity, whoſe Powers are broken, and who have conceived falſe Notions of GOD, as if *He was an hard Maſter, reaping where He did not ſow, and gathering where he did not ſtraw.* Beſides our Adverſary the Devil is conſtantly tempting us either to hide our Talents in the Earth, or to conſume them on our Luſts: Nothing therefore but the Almighty Grace of GOD can enable us to be faithful, this alone makes us ſincere and diligent in our Maſter's Service; without Divine Aſſiſtance

Aſſiſtance, we can do nothing; the Apoſtle *Paul* aſſerts this in the ſtrongeſt Terms, when he ſays, concerning himſelf, that he was *One who had obtained Mercy of the* LORD *to be faithful.* So that here is no Room for Boaſting, the beſt and moſt faithful Servants of CHRIST muſt be covered with Shame, when they conſider the many Frailties and Imperfections of their beſt Services; and if upon the whole, their LORD is pleaſed to accept and approve them, they muſt ſet the Crown on the Head of Free-Grace, for they were faithful, only becauſe *they obtained Mercy of the* LORD *to be ſo.*

1 Cor. vii. 25.

Fifthly, CHRIST will not only commend, but graciouſly reward the faithful Services of his People. But what are our Services for CHRIST, that He ſhould commend them! How few, and how imperfect! if they ſhould be *weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary*, would they not *be found wanting?* But our Merciful REDEEMER does not *deſpiſe the Day of ſmall Things*, but *accepts it according to what we have, and not according to what we have not*; He *ſeparates the Chaff from the Wheat*; and having covered the one with the Mantle of Forgiveneſs, He looks

looks on the other with Delight and Pleaſure, ſaying, *Well done, good and faithful Servant!* Nay, CHRIST will not only commend the faithful Services of his People, but will graciouſly reward them, *Thou haſt been faithful in a few Things, I will make thee Ruler over many Things: Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* Let it ſtill be remember'd that the Reward is not of *Debt* but of *Grace*; for there is no Proportion between our Services and our Crown; as the Apoſtle obſerves, when he ſays, *Theſe light Afflictions, which* we *endure for a* few *Moments, ſhall work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.*

Sixthly, WE may infer from the whole, the conſummate Happineſs and Felicity of all CHRIST's faithful Servants, and Miniſters, at the End of their Labours and Sufferings in this Life, *They will then enter into the Joy of their* LORD. Joy is one of the moſt delightful Paſſions; 'tis the Wing of the Soul, that carries it above all its Fears and Temptations: Now if the Proſpect of Heaven at a Diſtance, fills the Believing Soul with Pleaſure, how great muſt be the Tranſport when 'tis actually entring into the *Joy of his* LORD! When

When *in a Moment, or the Twinkling of an Eye,* it finds itſelf tranſported from Earth to Heaven, from a Bed of Pain and Sorrow, filled with all the Agonies of Death, and ſurrounded with the Tears and Lamentations of Friends endeavouring to retain the departing Spirit, to a World of conſummate Joy and Bliſs, where his Eyes ſhall be entertained with the moſt ſurprizing Objects, and his Ears with the moſt harmonious Melody, where he ſhall be advanced to the higheſt Degrees of Honour, and be filled with all the Fulneſs of GOD; and this not for a few Months or Years, but for ever; for *in his Preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at his Right Hand are Pleaſures for evermore.*

WELL, this is the happy Exchange that our Reverend Brother, the late worthy Paſtor of this Church, has made, who a few Weeks ago was employed in his LORD's Service, but has now received his everlaſting Reward; he was then a Member of the Church Militant, but is now joyned to the Church Triumphant; then he was with us in this Vail of Tears, but is now gone before us *into the Joy of his* LORD. Bleſſed Soul! whoſe *Robes are now waſhed and made White in the Blood of the Lamb,* who is now

now ſatisfied with the Divine Likeneſs, and *perfect, even as his Father who is in Heaven is perfect.*

I ſhall now give you ſome ſhort *Memoires* of the Life of this Excellent Perſon, and then endeavour to repreſent his Character, that you may be ſenſible of the Loſs you have ſuſtained by his Death, and may *be Followers of him, as he followed* CHRIST.

THE Reverend Mr. MATTHEW CLARKE was born at a ſolitary Houſe by the Side of *Leiceſter* Foreſt, *Feb.* 2. 1663. His Father having been ejected from the Eſtabliſhed Church at *Narborough*, for Nonconformity, had retired to this Place to cover himſelf from the Violence of his Perſecutors; but having devoted himſelf to the Service of CHRIST in the Miniſtry, he removed after ſome time to *Little Bowden*, and gathered a Congregation of *Proteſtant Diſſenters* in the Town of *Market Harborough*, with whom he continued between Forty and Fifty Years with great Uſefulneſs and Reputation 'till his Death.

THO' the Times in which our *Reverend Brother* was born and educated were very diſcouraging by reaſon of the rigorous Execution of the *Penal Laws* againſt *Proteſtant Diſſenters*, whereby the People were diſperſed, and their Miniſters

ſters fined, impriſoned, and baniſhed five Miles from all *Corporation Towns*, yet this good Man in the midſt of all this Darkneſs devoted his only Son to the Miniſtry, and took upon himſelf the chief part of his Education; tho' he afterwards placed him for ſome Time under the Care of another Learned Tutor, with whom he finiſhed his Studies *. I ſhall make no mention in this Place of his quick Improvement in the ſeveral *Arts* and *Sciences*; but only obſerve, that Divine Grace by an early Converſion, ſanctified all his Studies, and made them ſubſervient to that great Work for which he was deſigned.

He began his Miniſtry in the Year 1684, a Time of as great Severity againſt *Proteſtant Diſſenters* as had been known ſince the Reſtoration; and though there was no other Proſpect at that Time, but of Poverty and Reproach for Men of his Profeſſion, he reſolved, by Divine Aſſiſtance, to run all Hazards for the Support of the perſecuted Intereſt of Christ; and accordingly, Preached up and down in private Houſes, as often as he had Opportunity. His firſt Sermon was from thoſe

* The Reverend Mr. *Woodhouſe*.

thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, *By the Grace of* God, *I am what I am.* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

The firſt Three Years of his Miniſtry were ſpent chiefly in aſſiſting his Reverend Father; but in the Year 1687, when the *Penal Laws* were ſuſpended, he accepted of an Invitation to *Sandwich* in *Kent*, where he continued with great Acceptance for about Two Years, and left behind him a Name and Memorial amongſt that People, which is not forgotten to this Day.

In the Year 1689, he came to *London*, and was invited to aſſiſt the Reverend and aged Mr. *Stephen Ford*, then Paſtor of this Church: After ſome Time he was joyned with him in the Paſtoral Office, and at length in the Year 1694, he ſucceeded him in the whole of his Work, from which Time, for the Space of Thirty-two Years, even to the Day of his Death, *You yourſelves know after what manner he has been with you at all Seaſons, ſerving the* Lord *with all Humility of Mind, and with many Tears and Temptations which have befallen him; and how he kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but ſhewed, and taught you publickly, and from Houſe to Houſe the whole Counſel of* God, *teſtifying to all*, his Hearers,

Repentance towards GOD, *and Faith towards our Lord* JESUS CHRIST.

I am ſenſible it is a very difficult Task to give the World a juſt Idea, of this Excellent Perſon; they who were Strangers to his Uſefulneſs, may imagine I have flattered his Memory; when others who had a more intimate Acquaintance with his publick and private Life, will conclude, that I have fallen below my Subject, and not expreſſed his incomparable Worth: But let ſuch remember, that I am writing a Character, not a Panegyrick, and deſcribing a Man ſubject to like Paſſions and Infirmities with ourſelves, of which no Man was more ſenſible than himſelf. However, I ſhall ſpeak freely, and impartially what I know, and believe of my *Reverend Brother*, without regarding the Cenſures of others.

HE was a Perſon of good Learning and of a ſolid Judgment in Religion; his Acquaintance with the original Languages of the Bible deſcended to him as it were by Inheritance, his Father being one of the greateſt Criticks in the *Oriental* Tongues, of the Age in which he lived: In his younger Years he gave himſelf very much to Reading and Meditation, and made himſelf Maſter of the ſeveral Controverſies

ſies which have been debated amongſt learned Men on the ſeveral Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, ſo that though he began his Miniſtry. when he was not more than 21 Years of Age he appeared well furniſhed for the ſacred Imployment, *a Work-man that needed not be aſhamed.*

In his private Judgment he followed the Sentiments of the judicious Mr. *Calvin* in thoſe Points of Controverſy wherein that great Man diſtinguiſhed himſelf againſt the *Pelagians*, *Arians*, *Socinians*, and other Hereſies of the Times in which he lived. The Doctrines which he apprehended of greateſt Conſequence, and which were the chief Subjects of his Miniſtry were, the Eternal Counſels of Divine Wiſdom, concerning the Salvation of the *Elect*; the Ruin of Mankind by the Fall of *Adam*, and their Reſtitution to the Divine Favour by the Satisfaction of Christ: The Perſon and Operations of the Holy Spirit: The Doctrines of Salvation by Free-Grace, and of Juſtification by the Blood and Righteouſneſs of the Redeemer *which is unto all, and upon all that believe, without any Difference:* The Privileges, and Benefits of the new Covenant; with which he conſtantly enforced the Moral Obligations

tions that Chriſtians are under to the ſeveral Parts of their Duty: * But that which lay neat his Heart, eſpecially in his

* I cannot repreſent his Practice better than in his own Words.

" As to the Nature and Form of a Church, its " Officers and Diſcipline, we may apply the Words " of our Saviour, *Theſe ought ye not to have left undone.* " But there are other Things which Miniſters ought " more eſpecially to regard; they are to preach " Chriſt and make Him the *Alpha* and *Omega* of " their Miniſtry; his Name ſhould triumph in all " our Sermons; his Life, Death, Reſurrection and " Interceſſion, the Things He has done, ſuffered, and " purchaſed; theſe were the great Subjects of the " Apoſtle's Diſcourſes, *We preach not ourſelves but Chriſt* " *Jeſus the Lord*; to which ſucceeds the Work of the " Spirit, and the Grace of God, in making an ef- " fectual Application of Chriſt and his purchaſed " Benefits to the Souls of Men; which leads to " the great Doctrines of Faith, Repentance, the " Divine Birth, the new Creature, effectual Cal- " ling, Sanctification, and Holineſs, as Things with- " out which no Man can be ſaved; here ſhould " our Zeal chiefly be laid." Mr. *Clarke*'s Sermon at the Sep. of Mr. *Hurryon*. p. 15.

" He, is the true Goſpel Preacher that takes in " the whole Counſel of God, Law and Goſpel, " Grace and Duty, Doctrine and Practice, Faith " and Repentance, that tells Men what Chriſt has " done and ſuffered in order to their Salvation, " and then what He requires of them, and pro- " miſes to them on their Parts in order to it. I " have myſelf been told by ſome, that if Perſons " would hear Diſcourſes of Faith and Grace, they " muſt worſhip in places of ſuch a Denomina- " on, if they would hear a Diſcourſe of Works " and Morality, they muſt repair to ſuch a Place " of Worſhip; but I don't know, why both may " not be heard in one and the ſame Place, ſure I " am they ſhould, and I hope they are." *Ib.* p. 12.

his latter Days, was the Support and Defence of the Glorious Perſon of CHRIST, as *God-Man*, and *Mediator*, which is one of the great Myſteries of Godlineſs the Pillar and Ground of Truth; you who conſtantly attended his Miniſtry are Witneſſes how frequently he entertained you on this Subject, and ſome of his Brethren in the Miniſtry, who were favoured with more free Converſation with him, know the Clearneſs of his Judgment in theſe Points: he was therefore found in the Faith; nor did he come behind any of his Brethren in a true Chriſtian Zeal for the Service of CHRIST, or the Support and Maintenance of any of the important Points of Revelation, as far as the Laws of Nature or the Rules of Chriſtianity would allow.

IT muſt be confeſſed, and I mention it to the laſting Honour of his Name, and Memory, that he was a Perſon of great Candour, and Moderation; he was for *ſpeaking the Truth in Love:* and in all the Controverſies of the Age, careſull to avoid Extreams: though he conſtantly preached the Doctrines he believed, and practiſed thoſe Forms of Worſhip, and ſacred Order which appeared to him moſt conſonant to the Will of CHRIST in his Word, he never

ver made his own Judgment, a Standard of the Faith and Practice of his Brethren; his Soul was too generous, and his Charity too extenſive, to confine Salvation within the Limits of ſingle Party; he was therefore willing to aſſiſt among Societies of different Denominations, and to give the Right Hand of Fellowſhip to all who held the ſame glorious Head with himſelf. He loved the Face and Image of CHRIST wherever he beheld it, and as he was very ſolicitous leaſt an enormous Pretence to Charity, ſhould deſert and expoſe the glorious Truths of the Goſpel; he was no leſs fearful, leſt an ungoverned Zeal for Truth, ſhould make a ſhameful Inroad on Chriſtian Love; for as *Truth* and *Love* were happily joyned in his own Soul, it was his earneſt Deſire they might not be ſet at Variance in the Souls of his Brethren.

HIS publick Performances were laboured in private; for he was afraid to ſerve GOD with that which coſt him nonothing: In all his Diſcourſes he endeavoured to give every *Text* its proper Meaning: "For, ſays he in one of his printed Sermons *, "Alluſions may "be, and are often made; but to inter-

"pret

* Sermon for the Reverend Mr. *Hurryon*. p. 11.

" pret Scripture merely by the Sound of " Words, is playing with our *Bibles*, and " Trifling in the Preacher, as it ſerves " only to impoſe on the People, and in- " duces them to think the *Text* ſpeaks " what it never intended." His Method was juſt and regular, his Language plain and familiar, and chiefly drawn out of the Holy Scriptures, he carefully avoided the Extreams of excellency of Speech, and vulgar Expreſſions, which latter, he uſed to ſay, expoſed Religion to Contempt, and had a Tendency to make Men laugh at a Time when above all others they ought to be moſt ſerious.

ACCORDINGLY, his Behaviour in the Pulpit was grave, and reverent, and ſuch as commanded the Attention of his Hearers; he had a graceful Utterance, free from Affectation; he knew how to enter the Conſcicnce, and ſoften all the inward Paſſions of the Soul. How often have you heard him like a *Boanerges*, ſtriking the Sinner to the Ground, and making him cry out, Trembling and Aſtoniſhed, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* And at other Times, like a *Son of Conſolation*, repreſenting the precious Promiſes of the Goſpel, and winning the Soul over to CHRIST. In a Word, *He was an Eloquent Man in the Pulpit, mighty in the Scriptures, and being fervent*

vent in Spirit, he ſpake, and taught diligently the Things of the LORD, *and mightily convinced his Hearers.* An evidence of this, was the great Succeſs that attended his Miniſtry. His Audience in all Places where he ſtatedly laboured was ſerious, and crouded. When he firſt came to *this Church*, it was one of the ſmalleſt amongſt the Tribes of our *Iſrael*; but *the Word of* GOD, by a Divine Bleſſing upon his Labours, *did ſo mightily increaſe*, that *great Numbers were added to* it from time to time; inſo much that at his Death, he left it one of the moſt numerous and flouriſhing Congregations in the City.

HE was frequent and conſtant in his Miniſterial Imployment, no Man preached oftner, and to better Purpoſe than Mr. *Clarke*. He was *in Labours more abundant*, and I have ſometimes feared to the Prejudice of his Health. But as every Congregation was deſirous of his Labours, he was ſo good as hardly to know how to give them a Denial: Indeed his Heart was in his Work, he was willing to be ſpent in his Maſter's Service, and it was the greateſt Pleaſure of his Life to be doing Good to Souls.

I MUST not omit his extraordinary Gift in Prayer, eſpecially on particular Occaſions, wherein the Welfare of Families,

milies, the Lives of Uſeful Perſons, or the publick Good of his Country was concerned; how would he wreſtle with the ALMIGHTY, and fill his Mouth with Arguments! how fervent was his Spirit, and with what a rich Variety of Expreſſions would he pour out his Soul to GOD, as if he had reſolved before-hand not to let him go, except He heard him: What a Bleſſing to a Nation, a Church, or a Family, is ſuch a Man of Prayer!

THESE Miniſterial Endowments were farther adorned with an unaffected Piety, and Devotion of Mind. He was uſually with GOD *in ſecret* ſome Hours in the Morning, before his Family was ſtirring, but how he ſpent theſe Hours of Retirement, will not be known, 'till *He that ſees in ſecret, ſhall reward him openly*. His Family was a Houſe of Prayer, and the whole of his Converſation was exemplary and uſeful: It was the great Deſire of his Life to ſee his Brethren in the Miniſtry walking circumſpectly towards them that are without; for he would often ſay, "That Men were to "be eſteemed as much for their Manner "of Life, as for their Art of Preaching; "and that an *Orthodox* Head would not "atone for a corrupt Life." This was his ſettled Judgment, and the Rule of his Practice; and I may venture to ſay,

without Suſpicion of Flattery, *That in all theſe Things, he was an Example to the Believers, in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, and in Purity.*

ONE Thing more was very peculiar in this Extraordinary Perſon, which was the excellent Temper of his Spirit, in which there was an agreeable Mixture of the Gentleman and Chriſtian; there was ſomething ſweet and agreeable in his Aſpect. He was of a cheerful Temper; affable, and courteous to all Men; he had a great Government of his Paſſions, being ſeldom angry; but if he was ſo at any time, he took Care not to let the Sun go down on his Wrath, he ſpake Evil of no Man; and uſed to ſay, "He would not be of an implacable "Spirit for the whole World." There was nothing of Uncharitableneſs or Cenſoriouſneſs in his Make and Frame, nor did any thing grieve him ſo much as the unnatural Quarrels and Diviſions among Chriſtians, and Miniſters, of the ſame Faith, and Hope with himſelf; of theſe he complained both in publick and private; I wiſh I could ſay, they had no manner of Influence, in bringing down his hoary Head with Sorrow to the Grave.

If we conſider him in the ſeveral Relations in which he ſtood, I believe few Perſons have filled them up to greater Advantage, he was a kind, and loving Husband, a tender, and indulgent Parent, a faithful and conſcientious Paſtor, liberal almoſt to a Fault, to the Poor; and upon the whole, a ſincere, upright Man, *in whoſe Spirit there was no Guile.* The ſeveral Qualifications which the Apoſtle gives of a good Biſhop met in him, as much as in any Man I have known, *He was blameleſs, the Husband of one Wife, vigilant, ſober, of good* Behaviour, *given to Hoſpitality, apt to teach; not given to Wine, no Striker, nor greedy of filthy Lucre; but patient; not a Brawler, nor covetous, one that ruled well his own Houſe, having his Children in Subjection with all gravity; not a Novice; but one that had a good report, even of them that are without.* 1 Tim. iii. 2, 3, 4, 6.

If there was any alloy to theſe extraordinary Qualities, it was an exceſs of Modeſty, and Diffidence in himſelf; for though he had a quick Penetration into Men and Things, yet being deſirous, as much as poſſible, to live peaceably with all Men, he choſe in his latter Days, to retire in ſome meaſure from publick Buſineſs, rather than give Offence

Offence to any, which gave ſome little Check to that univerſal Influence, his great Name muſt otherwiſe have given him, in all Affairs relating to the Diſſenting Intereſt.

'Tis no Wonder that a Perſon of ſuch Accompliſhments ſhould have the Eſteem, and Reſpect of all who had the Happineſs of his Acquaintance; his Converſation was coveted both in City and Country by all Ranks, and Orders of Men, eſpecially by his Brethren in the Miniſtry, the Elder of whom loved him as a Brother, and the Younger reverenced him as a Father; I believe no Man of his Profeſſion had more Friends, and fewer Enemies; for indeed that muſt be a ſad Character in Life that could be an open, and avowed Enemy to Good Mr. *Clarke*, who was the Delight of his Friends, and in the Opinion of all Diſintereſted Perſons, an Ornament to his Profeſſion, and the Glory and Honour of that particular Cauſe he eſpouſed. One Thing farther crowned the Happineſs of this excellent Perſon, which was, that he did not outlive his Uſefulneſs, but ſupported his Character and Reputation to the laſt; he preached the laſt *Sabbath* that he lived; and though he did not die ſo full of Days, as we could have wiſhed, he went off the Stage full of Honour,

and

and amidſt the Sighs and Tears of all that have any real Concern for pure and undefiled Religion in general, and more eſpecially for the declining Intereſt of CHRIST amongſt *Proteſtant Diſſenters. My Father, my Father, the Chariots of Iſrael and the Horſemen thereof!*

HIS Death was ſudden and unexpected to his Friends, but not to himſelf, who felt the Decays of Nature, and had received the awful Sentence in himſelf ſome Months ago. He ſpoke to me concerning his Diſſolution with great Serenity and Satisfaction of Mind, as one that was deſirous to leave *this* World, as ſoon as it ſhould pleaſe GOD, for a *better*. He accordingly ſetled his worldly Affairs, and with a firm Faith and Truſt in CHRIST reſigned himſelf to the Will of GOD. Several of the laſt Sermons he preached, and the very laſt Prayer he offered up to GOD in his Family, will not quickly be forgotten by them that were preſent. Some Years ago when he had been ſtruggling with a malignant Fever for ſeveral Weeks, and his Life was given up by the moſt skilfull, and eminent Phyſicians, he was ſnatched out of the Territories of Death, by the Arm of fervent and importunate Prayer; moſt of the Miniſters of this City aſſiſting his Church in offering up daily Supplications

plications to GOD for ſo Uſefull and Valuable a Life; and I never knew a more remarkable Anſwer; for the Diſtemper took an unuſual Turn, and GOD was pleaſed to add Nineteen Years to his Life: But now the Seizure was ſo violent, as hardly left any Room for Interceſſion, univerſal Nature was oppreſſed at once, his Speech and Underſtanding were loſt in a few Minutes, and when he had languiſhed in this manner from *Thurſday* till the Morning of the *Lord's-Day* following, he departed in Peace, amidſt the Tears and Lamentations of his Relations and Friends; and went to keep an eternal *Sabbath* with his dear REDEEMER, from whoſe Mouth he has now received that bleſſed Sentence, *Well done, good and faithfull Servant; thou haſt been faithfull in a few Things, I will make thee Ruler over many Things, enter thou into the Joy of thy* LORD.

I WILL not attempt to aggravate your Grief any farther, for the Loſs of this eminent Servant of CHRIST, but only take the Liberty to recommend to you theſe Three Things.

Firſt, BE deeply affected with the Hand of GOD; for it is an awakening Providence you are under. You of this Church have loſt your ſpiritual Father

who

who naturally cared for you, and went in and out before you, feeding you with Knowledge, aud dividing amongſt you the Bread of Life; the Sinners of this Congregation have loſt an awakening Preacher; his Family the Support and Comfort of their Lives, and the Church of GOD a Pillar and Standard-Bearer. Let every one ſmite on his Breaſt and ſay, What have I contribued towards ſuch an awfull Providence? And you, more eſpecially, who have enjoyed his Labours for many Years, ask yourſelves ſuch Queſtions as theſe: Have I emproved his Miniſtry, ſtrengthned his Hands, been thankfull for his Labours, and prayed as I ought for ſo Valuable a Life? And let all that have the Intereſt of CHRIST at Heart, mourn the Loſs of ſo Able a Miniſter of the *New Teſtament*, and ſay, with the Prophet, *By whom Lord ſhall* Jacob *ariſe, for he is ſmall?*

Secondly, REMEMBER *him who had the Rule over you, and who has ſpoken to you the Word of* GOD, *whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the End of his Converſation.* Remember his Doctrine, his Counſels, and the Travel of his Soul for your Salvation: Remember his affectionate Concern, for your Families, Heb. xiii. 9.

and for the riſing Generation; follow his Faith, his Patience, and Charity; imitate his holy and inoffenſive Converſation, and let his Name and Memory be precious amongſt you. And ſhall I add one Thing more, Remember then his Widow and Fatherleſs Children; for though they may not abſolutely need your Support, 'tis your Duty to give them Reſpect and Honour; for in them your Paſtor lives now he is dead. I mention this the rather, that you may wipe off the Reproach that is commonly caſt upon Diſſenting Congregations, That as ſoon as their Miniſters are dead, their Families are buried and forgotten.

Thirdly, PRAY to Him who has the Reſidue of the SPIRIT, to make up your Loſs, by ſending you another able and faithful Paſtor, who may break to you the Bread of Life. Keep together in the Way of your Duty, waiting on GOD for Counſel and Direction: *Let all Men know you are the Diſciples of* CHRIST, *by your loving one another:* The beſt of Men have their Infirmities and Paſſions, *but bear ye one another's Burdens and ſo fulfill the Law of* CHRIST, remember, how good

good and how pleaſant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity: *I beſeech you therefore, by the Name of our Lord* JESUS CHRIST, *that ye all ſpeak the ſame Things, and that there be no Diviſions amongſt you, but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the ſame Mind, and in the ſame Judgment.* 1 Cnr. i. 10. *Finally, my Brethren, be perfect, be of good Comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the* GOD *of Love and Peace ſhall be with you.* 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

FINIS.

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